

Conference Resolution

6th Barents Parliamentary Conference

23-24 April in Harstad, Norway

On the explicit invitation of the Norwegian Parliament, representatives of the national parliaments of Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden, and also representatives of the European Parliament, the regional parliamentary bodies of the Barents region, the Nordic Council, the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, the Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians, the Parliamentary Association of the North-West of Russia, the Sami Parliamentary Council, as well as invited guests and experts from relevant governmental and non-governmental authorities, met on 23-24 April 2013 in Harstad, County of Troms, Norway.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Barents cooperation which has proved its importance and significant potential.

The main themes of the discussions were the strengthening the political cooperation in the Barents region, sustainable industrial and economic development, cooperation in research and education and development of human resources.

The Parliamentary Participants of the Conference,

Taking note of the expected signing of a new Kirkenes declaration at the meeting in Kirkenes 3-4 June 2013;

Taking into account the resolution from the 5th Barents Parliamentary Conference in Luleå May 20 2011;

Having regard to the Program of the Norwegian Presidency of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2011-2013;

Having regard to the Resolution of the Second Barents Indigenous Peoples' Congress in Kirkenes, Norway, 9-10 February 2012;

Welcoming the incoming Finnish Presidency of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council;

Welcoming the incoming presidency of the Arkhangelsk region in the Barents Regional Council;

Promoting further strengthening of cooperation between parliamentarians from the parliaments of the Northern regions of Norway, Russia, Finland and Sweden, participating in the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation;

Recommend the national and regional governments of the Barents region to

Regarding Strengthening of the Political Cooperation in the Barents region, to

1. Include representatives from the Barents parliamentary cooperation in the delegations to the Ministerial meetings in the Barents cooperation, as well as to the meetings of the Barents Regional Council and Barents Regional Committee;
2. Strengthen the contact between intergovernmental bodies and their corresponding parliamentary assemblies and bodies;
3. Strengthen the long term work to minimize and simplify the procedures for visa, work towards creating a visa-free Barents region, and consider taking mutual steps in order to facilitate movement of work force in the region;
4. Address the need for a structured business dialogue and Corporate Social Responsibility, by strengthening small businesses' opportunities and consider to establish an economic forum;
5. Consider cross-border cooperation and coordination vital, such as in the Baltic Sea region and in the framework of the Northern Dimension Policy between EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland;
6. Underline that enhanced participation by the indigenous peoples and the local communities in the Barents cooperation would greatly contribute to this cooperation.

Regarding Environment and Sustainable Industrial and Economic Development, to

7. Agree on a comprehensive Barents transport plan which includes transport on roads, railway, sea and air, and on the development of the Northern Sea Route;
8. Promote environmental protection in the region and make joint efforts aimed at ensuring nuclear and radiation safety;
9. Continue to work towards the implementation of the BEAC Agreement on Cooperation in Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response and the Arctic Council Agreement on Cooperation in Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue. Contribute to the early adoption of a pan-Arctic document in the area of preparedness and response to marine oil spills;
10. Address the causes of climate change, including locally produced pollutants, as well as mitigation of and adaptation to its effects;
11. Pay special attention to ensuring sustainable economic growth in the region, based on the highest environmental and safety standards, increasing competitiveness, developing the energy sphere, contributing to the implementation of innovative projects and make use of the unique scientific and human resources potential of the region, in the interest and to the benefit of its population, including indigenous peoples;

12. Investigate the possibilities for an independent financial mechanism in the Barents region that would contribute to the fulfillment of the investment potential in Northern Europe;
13. Emphasize the importance of the region to the implementation of the European Union-Russia Roadmap for Energy Cooperation until 2050, with Iceland and Norway as important partners, as well as for the joint objective of achieving a Pan-European Energy Space by 2050;
14. Highlight the positive role of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics for the region.

Regarding Cooperation in Research and Education to meet the Challenges in the Barents Region, to

15. Strengthen existing and create new arenas for students and researchers to meet, cooperate and exchange experiences;
16. View joint scientific research resulting in the development of specific recommendations and implementation of measures aimed at preserving and increasing natural Atlantic salmon population as a priority of the Barents cooperation;
17. Strengthen, expand and increase coordination on mobility and exchange programs involving students in Barents region;
18. Promote the acknowledgment and protection of traditional knowledge in cooperation within research and innovation.

Regarding development of human resources, opportunities for young people in the region, youth entrepreneurship, cultural industries, to

19. Stimulate and encourage cultural cooperation and innovation in the Barents region;
20. Recognize economic development as one of the fundamentals in creating sustainable societies;
21. Increase cross-border cooperation to stimulate entrepreneurship;
22. Strengthen the work to encourage young people to stay in the North, by promoting youth cooperation, involvement of young delegates in the political processes shaping the region, and in business activities;
23. Stimulate the cooperation between universities and the business sector to increase innovation and entrepreneurship;
24. Support the development of entrepreneurship among the indigenous peoples, paying particular attention to development of traditional livelihoods into viable enterprises that may improve living conditions and social situation of indigenous peoples;
25. To promote and protect tolerance, mutual respect and freedom of expression, and to strengthen the human rights throughout the entire Barents region and its neighborhood.

